



Hevajra Practice in Phyang Monastery in Ladakh

Phyang is a nice village in Ladakh, about 20 km from the capital Leh, located on an altitude of about 3500m. Between high dry mountains a little river waters the fruitful fields of the valley.



According to the ancient history Phyang was one of the very early capitals in Ladakh, the trade road passing through the lower part of the village. It is even thought to have been the most ancient town in Western Tibet.

In the upper part of Phyang the ruins of the old monastery and king's palace can still be seen today.



The today Phyang monastery is situated on a hill in the middle of the Phyang valley.

It was built at about 1600 by Choje Dema Kunga Dragpa at the time of King Jamyang Namgyal who had the reign of the Namgyal dynasty of Ladakh from 1595 until his death 1616.

It is said that King Namgyal had ordered to build a long canal to solve the water problem for a new colony and many villagers had been digging the canal, when suddenly a lizard appeared from under the earth, large and strange looking. As one man of the working villagers killed the lizard, King Jamyang Namgyal fell ill in his palace. Nobody could help him and therefore the king prayed to his own family deity who gave the prophecy that Choje Dema Kunga Dragpa should be called to heal the king. A message was sent to the Lama just meditating in a cave near to Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar. After having asked twice the lake whether he should travel to heal the king and having received positive answers the Lama decided to travel to Ladakh to help the king. In the royal palace of Ladakh he sat in meditation for days and slowly the king was perfectly healed. The king was very thankful and requested him to stay in Ladakh as royal teacher or at least to build a Drikung monastery to honor Jigten Sumgon, as there was no Drikung monastery yet in Ladakh. Choje Dema Kunga Dragpa agreed to build a monastery and started to look for suitable land, when he saw in a vision Achi Chokyi Dolma sitting on a hill, waving a flag and beckoning him. Recognizing this as a good omen he decided to build the monastery on this hill. The king was very happy, offered this land to the Lama and also some other villages. Through those causes of events, the Phyang monastery was founded by Choje Kunga. Thus Phyang Monastery was the first monastery, which introduced the Drikung teachings of Jigten Sumgon in Ladakh. Since then the monastery has flourished and now it is the main seat of the Drikung Kagyu Lineage in Ladakh beside some other Drikung monasteries which have been founded later.



Every year on the 28th and 29th lunar day of the 5th Tibetan month the monastery festival, called Tsedup, is celebrated for the welfare of the people and for the prosperity of the region. It is a great event for the villagers, but most important the performances of the Chams, the traditional Tantric dances. Not every year, only in special years the great thangka of Jigten Sumgon is shown.



Konchok Tashi, the Chojok of the first Hevajra Drubchö in Phyang, as Black Hat Dancer during the Phyang festival in 2018



Up to now H.H. Drikung Kyabgön Thinle Lhundup bestowed 2 Hevajra empowerments in Ladakh. The first empowerment was given in 1985 in the context of the Kagyu Nagdsö in Leh. The second empowerment was given during the Pig Year Teachings 2007 in Phyang. After these Pig Year Teachings the construction of the new Hevajra temple in Phyang was started and then inaugurated in 2013 by H.H. Drikung Kyabgön Thinle Lhundup. Now, in the 2019 Pig Year Teachings, again His Holiness will bestow the Great Hevajra Empowerment in Ladakh.

Here the new Hevajra temple can be seen on the left side of the monastery



Impressions from the inauguration of the Hevajra Temple in 2013





After the inauguration His Holiness installed the annual Hevajra Drubchö taking place in the Hevajra temple from 4th to 15th lunar day of the 7th month of the Tibetan calendar.

The retreat is practiced as Drubchö, four sessions a day starting at 5.30 a.m. up to 5 p.m., additionally in the afternoon the protector practice is done including Dudsolma, the special protector of the Hevajra practice.

Structure of the Drubchö:

In the first 3 days of the 7th lunar month general preparations are done. The actual retreat starts the 4th day with the Sapchok puja, that is the mandala blessing of the ground. On the 5th and 6th day the sand mandala is completed, also the tormas and the shrine is built up. From 7th day onwards the Drubchö is practiced in silence, talks are only allowed if really necessary. On the 15th day of the Tibetan month the sand mandala is dissolved. At the end of the very first Hevajra Drubchö, a fire puja was practiced.

In the first Drubchö about 40 monks from the main Drikung monasteries in Ladakh participated, these are Phyang, Lamayuru and Shachukol. In the following years mainly the monks from Phyang monastery participated.

The main tasks of the Drubchö are done by the Lopon (Vajra Master), Umtse (Chant Master) and Chojok (Shrine Master), who are elected in the monastery every three years.

When the first Hevajra retreat took place in Phyang Tsering Dorje was Lopon, Rigzin Wangchuk was Umtse and Konchok Tashi was Chojok. These were followed by Rigzin Namgyal as Lopon, Konchok Zangpo as Umtse and Konchok Gyaltsen as Chojok. In 2018 they changed again and now Konchok Rinchen is Lopon, Tashi Stopges is Umtse and Tundup Namgyal is Chojok,

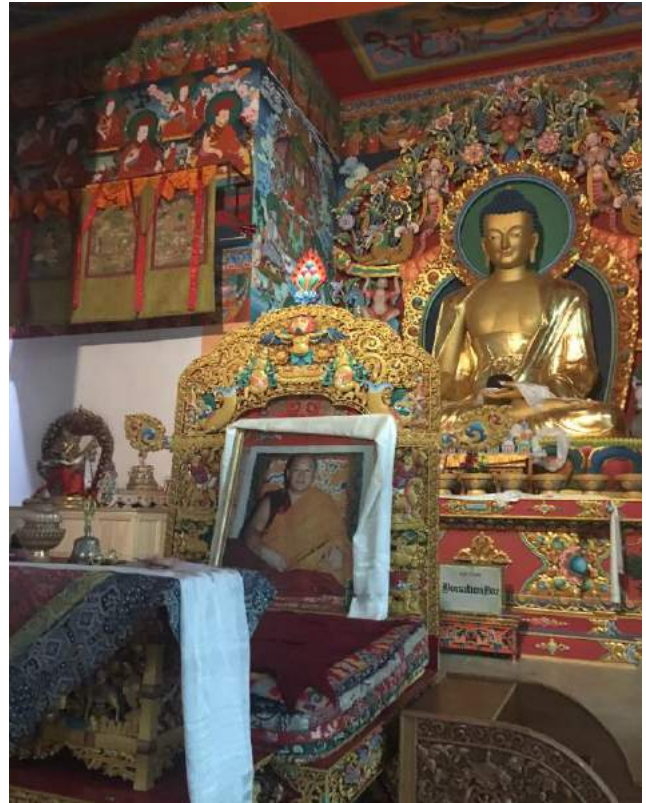


Puja in the old Jokhang temple of Phyang Monastery, all 3 Umtse together: second left is Konchok Zangpo, right to him Tashi Stopges, on his right side Rigzin Wangchuk, and very right the actual Lopon Konchok Rinchen.

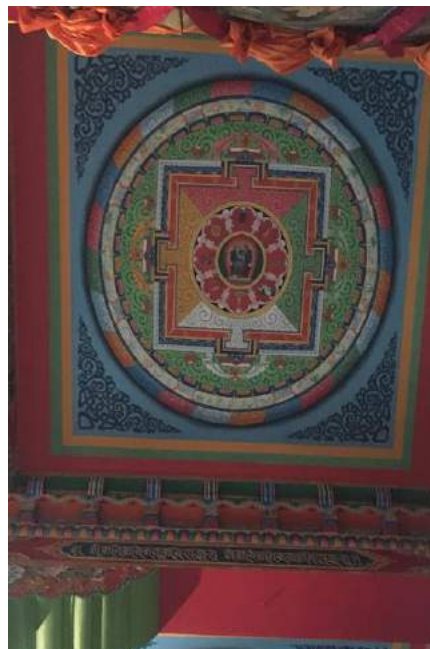


Konchok Zangpo and Rigzin Wangchuk on the way to Hevajra Temple of Phyang Monastery and view on Phyang village

Inside the Hevajra Temple



Hevajra Statue and the mandala on the ceiling of the temple





The article was written by Elvira Glueck (Germany), especially based on her visit to Phyang Monastery during summer 2018. On top of that, she included impressions from her former visits to Ladakh since 1992, and participating in the inauguration of the Hevajra Temple in 2013.

The idea of the article was derived from the Marpa Ngok Hevajra Nairatmya Group which, since October 2016/June 2017, worked under the auspices of His Holiness Drikung Kyabgön Thinle Lhundup, contributing to His Holiness's vision and wish concerning Marpa Lotsawa the great, the Ngok lineage and the two Yidam practices, i.e. Hevajra 9 deity mandala, and Nairatmya 15 deity mandala. Especially the interest was to find out more about how the Hevajra practice in Phyang Monastery and how the Hevajra temple came into being, how the idea was conceived, and how it was realized.

Elvira Glueck, an experienced traveler to Ladakh, and long-time buddhist practitioner with strong ties to His Holiness and the Marpa Ngok Hevajra Nairatmya tradition which His Holiness has been working on reviving since late 1980's, took upon herself to uncover these questions, and more.

Here a photo of Elvira Glueck in Phyang, together with Khenpo Rangdröl (right side) from Dehra Dun and Khenpo Namdak from Phyang Monastery.



In Phyang monastery with Khenpo Rangdol and Khenpo Namdak (from right to left)

It is the aspiration of these articles about Phyang Monastery and the Hevajra Temple there to establish a close connection between the Marpa Ngok activities going on at the Milarepa Retreat Center in Schneverdingen/Germany and the equivalent activities, under the auspices of His Holiness, taking place in the Hevajra Temple of Phyang Monastery. **Elvira Glueck intends to follow up with more detailed articles and photos in the near future.**



Elvira Glueck is the liaison for cultivating this connection, and there are actions taking place to start close cooperation with Phyang Monastery. In 2020 Lamas from Phyang Monastery will take part in the European Hevajra Drubchen for the first time. Further collaborations are planned.

Also, there are intentions of fulfilling His Holiness's wish to bring many different kinds of Hevajra statues to the Hevajra Temple at Phyang Monastery. The first two statues in focus are from respectively Indonesia and Cambodia.

Here a photo of the 'by His Holiness appointed' western Umtse and project manager of the Marpa Ngok Hevajra Nairatmya Initiative, Carl 鍾 Djung, together with Konchok Zangpo and Rigzin Wangchuk, the two former Umtse from Phyang, during the good occasion of a series of spontaneous meetings in October 2017, at Jangchub Ling, Dehra Dun, India.



མར་པ་ལོ་སྤྱི་བ་བརྒྱུད་ལ།
གཏམ་རྒྱན་མང་པོའི་འོང་རྩོད་ཡོད།
ཚོག་ཤིང་འཛིན་པོའི་སྐྱེས་བུ་ལ།
བརྒྱུད་པ་བཟང་པོའི་བག་ཤེས་ཤོག

In this transmission lineage of Marpa Lotsawa, You'll find the door through which much good news will arrive.

May all of those who take this as their central pillar. May this person be blessed and enjoy the good that comes of an excellent lineage.



from song of Lotsawa Marpa,
by Marpa and Dharma
say (not famous) to Milarepa
09 August 2018, Dharma-dar
www.mar-ngok.org